

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

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THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM WAS SENT ACTION NEW DELHI AND INFOR
CALCUTTA AND MARAS 20 MARCH 1978 AND IS REPEATED FOR YOUR
ACTION/INFORMATION.

QUOTE:

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: MNUC, IN
SUBJ: INDIAN NUCLEAR AFFAIRS

1. MARCH 20 BOMBAY EDITION OF TIMES OF INDIA CARRIES FRONTPAGE
PHOTO STORY HEADLINED "ABRUPT TRANSFER OF DR. RAMANNA." TIMES
STATES THAT DR. RAJA RAMANNA, DIRECTOR OF BARC, HAS BEEN REMOVED
FROM HIS "PRESENT PRESTIGIOUS POST" AND TRANSFERRED TO NEW DELHI AS
SCIENTIFIC ADVISER TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND DIRECTOR GENERAL
OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WITH THE RANK OF SECRETARY
TO THE GOI.

2. TIMES NOTES WHILE THIS IS TECHNICALLY A PROMOTION IT IS IN
FACT THE OPPOSITE AND THERE IS CONSTERNATION IN THE ATOMIC
ENERGY ESTABLISHMENT. AS CONGEN CAN CONFIRM, THE STORY REPORTS
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THAT TWICE IN THE PAST RAMANNA TURNED DOWN THIS POSITION IN THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE.

3. STORY GOES ON TO SAY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SERIOUS
DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN SETHNA AND RAMANNA
ESPECIALLY SINCE A CONTROVERSY STARTED OVER THE PEACEFUL
NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AT POKHARAN. THE TIMES ALSO SAYS THAT

THE "PRESSURES AND PULLS RELATING TO NPT AND FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS HAS ALSO HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH DR. RAMANNA'S SUDDEN TRANSFER." NO OTHER ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAPER CARRIED STORY.

4. COMMENT: RAMANNA HAS HAD HIS HANDS FULL IN MODERATING THE GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY TO FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. HIS SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSED TO SAFEGUARDS WHICH THEY VIEW AS A THREAT TO THEIR DAILY BREAD. IN TRYING TO FIND A MIDDLE PATH BETWEEN HIS ROLE AS A PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH NUCLEAR AFFAIRS AND LEADER OF THE INDIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. (PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL SCIENCE ACADEMY - INSA) RAMANNA HAS AT TIMES RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES WITH SETHNA. THE LATTER HAS WANTED TO AVOID PRESS CONTROVERSY AND ANY PUBLIC AIRING OF DIFFERENCES OF OPINION IN THE NUCLEAR ESTABLISHMENT. HE HAS BEEN UPSET BY SEVERAL ARTICLES RAMANNA HAS PUBLISHED ON SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS REALTED TO THE PEACEFUL USE OF THE ATOM. GIVEN SETHNA'S AUTOCRATIC PRACTICES IN ADMINISTRATION IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE FOR CONGEN TO PROBE DEEPLY INTO THESE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE IAEC. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ATTEMPTS ALONG THESE LINES HAVE DRAWN REBUKES FROM SETHNA WHO HAS THREATENED TO CUT OFF OUR DIRECT LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH HIM IF WE ATTEMPT TO BROADEN OUR SOURCES WITHIN THE IAEC. SINCE SETHNA HAS BEEN SO COOPERATIVE ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS, WE HAVE FELT IT WISE AND PRUDENT TO HEED HIS WARNINGS. NEVERTHELESS, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION WITH RAMANNA AND OTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS. FROM THESE IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THERE ARE NO PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SETHNA AND RAMANNA REGARDING INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. THEY BOTH BELIEVE THAT INDIA MUST HAVE AN EXTENSIVE PROGRAM COVERING ALMOST ALL FIELDS OF NUCLEAR ENDEAVOR DEVOTED TO PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ATOM. THEIR DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN OVER TACTICS. WHILE SETHNA IS POSITIVE AND DIRECT ONCE A COURSE OF ACTION HAS BEEN CHOSEN HE IS NEVERTHELESS GIVEN TO VERY COMPLICATED TACTICAL MANEUVERING WHICH SURPRISES MANY OBSERVERS WHO SEE ONLY THE FORCEFUL AND DECISIVE ADMINISTRATOR IN ACTION. RAMANNA, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS MORE THOUGHTFUL AND CONSIDERATE AND IS GIVEN TO TAKING WIDER LATITUDE IN CARRYING OUT AGREED UPON POLICIES. AS LONG AS HIS ACTIONS DO NOT CONTRADICT BASIC POLICIES, RAMANNA SEES NO REASON NOT TO CONSIDER HUMAN ELEMENTS AND ACCOMMODATE THE PROFESSIONAL VIEWS OF HIS CALLEAGUES.

5. RAMANNA IS THE ONLY OTHER INDIAN OFFICIAL IN BOMBAY TO WHOM SETHNA PAYS ANY DEFERENCE IN MAKING DECISIONS IN THE NUCLEAR AREA AND EVEN IN THIS REGARD HE WILL CONSULT RAMANNA ONLY ON MATTERS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE. BUT IN SUCH AFFAIRS WHICH HAVE INCLUDED BUY-BACK AND FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, SETHNA HAS TOLD CONGEN THAT HE CANNOT MOVE WITHOUT RAMANNA'S ASSENT. RELATIONS

BETWEEN THESE TWO GIANTS OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM HAVE ALWAYS APPEARED ON THE SURFACE AT LEAST TO BE CORDIAL AND CONGENIAL. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT PERSONALLY THESE TWO MEN HAVE THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER. HOWEVER, IT HAS ALSO BEEN CLEAR THAT SETHNA HAS BEEN UNHAPPY THAT RAMANNA HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO DO A BETTER JOB IN CHECKING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY'S OUTBURSTS AGAINST FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. SINCE THERE IS NO ONE ELSE IN INDIA WITH RAMANNA'S INFLUENCE IN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, IT IS HARD TO SAY HOW ANY SUCCESSOR COULD BE ANY MORE SUCCESSFUL THAT RAMANNA IN MODERATING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY'S OPPOSITION TO NPT AND FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. CONSEQUENTLY CONGEN WOULD DOUBT THAT SETHNA ENGINEERED RAMANNA'S REMOVAL.

6. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE AN ENORMOUS HUE AND CRY IN BOMBAY AGAINST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RAMANNA'S TRANSFER TO DELHI. RAMANNA HIMSELF TOLD THE CONGEN A FEW WEEKS AGO THAT HE WAS VERY HAPPY IN BOMBAY AND LOOKED FORWARD TO CONTINUING HIS 30-YEARS STAY IN THIS CITY. CONGEN WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BUT WHAT A SERIOUS EFFORT IS MOUNTED BY RAMANNA'S MANY FRIENDS HERE TO KEEP HIM IN BOMBAY. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE STRONG PRESSURES ON SETHNA TO LEND HIS NAME TO SUCH AN EFFORT.

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